An appraisal has been made in this work of the experimental trends in modern Hindi poetry in the context of the new bearings derived from Eliot's poetry and critical writings with particular reference to the work of four major poets. This, however, does not imply that Eliot's influence is confined to these writers alone: in fact the entire gamut of Hindi poetry in the forties and even later came under the direct or indirect spell of Eliot. There are other poets, too, whose writings bear an unmistakable stamp of Eliot's and betray other western influences. Nor are all these writers, by any means, minor: many of them have made significant contribution to modern Hindi poetry. Their exclusion is, therefore, a matter of convenience for the purpose of this thesis. The four major poets already discussed represent a characteristic trend and with the exception of Bachchan - also happen to be critics in their own rights, like Eliot. This is why they have been treated in the present dissertation to signify the trend that may be called in a general way, Eliotian in spirit.

One of the most important features of the modern trends in the Hindi poetry is to divest "experiment" of disparaging associations. Experiment is not perversity, observes a modern Hindi critic, "to consider it as is to atrophy the sensibility and encourage a narrow outlook and sense of inhibition in art and literature. Experiment is in fact evolved in a reaction against such a perverse approach." The experiment spearheaded by Agyeya was carried forward by many poets - these included in the Tar Saptak, namely Muktibodh, Girija Kumar Mathur, Bharat Bhushan Agarwal, Nemichandra, Prabhakar Macve and Ram Bila Sharma.

1. Lakshmi Kant Varma: Naï Kavita Ke Pratiman (P.215)
Agyeya has been reluctant to identify himself or his colleagues — "fellow-way-farers" as he prefers to call them — with any particular school. Nevertheless, there can be no controversy that it is Agyeya who gave a new direction to modern Hindi poetry — both by his own poetic writings as well as by the critical tenets that he propounded. In the second phase of experiment that followed after 1952, there is definite evidence of evolution: the experiments by new had been stabilised so much so that by the late sixties the "experimental" poets themselves started following a set pattern. They had before them the successful portrayal of the grim realities of life through an effective and novel technique attempted by the poets in the Tar Saptak. The devaluation of ethical, social and cultural standards was by now complete: 'religion' was a refuse of the past; the 'family' was extinct in the context of individual outlook; 'conjugal life' was to be treated as a mere interval between the respective diverses; love is nothing but a palliative for the boredom practised through birth control pills; 'God' was merely an improbable fancy; 'humanity' was nothing but shapeless crowd without any heritage or bearings. The renaissance brought about by the experimental poets in the forties was itself relegated into decadence and attained a state against which it had initially revolted. By 1960 the images, themes, contents, technique and style conformed to a set pattern, as in the 'Chhayavad' school of poetry and the poets under the pretext of expressing the intensity of sensitivity, got more and more divorced from the environment around.

Notwithstanding the traces of decadence in later poetry, there is no doubt about being a stage in the evolutionary process. The later poets, though they were not so mature, brought the language of poetry

2. Girija Kumar Mathur: The Emergency of Non-acceptance in Nai Kavita.

Seemaen Aur Sambhawanayan.

Ibid. (P.12)

Ibid. (P.14)

Ibid. (P.14)
further nearer to the spoken word and expressed the modern sensibility in an equally effective manner. As Hari Narayan Vyas, a poet included in the *Deesra Saptak* which followed the *Tar Saptak*—as held the same view as Hulme:—

"(1) The images of poetry should, as far as possible, be taken from real life. Nature itself is the symbol of beauty. To the Indian farmer it is a blessing which can contribute effectively to the inner as well as outward refinement of poetry.

(2) The language is a forceful weapon of life and Society, but it has to live with and not away from life. If the language of poetry is diffuse, then its primary duty—that is to help the mankind to struggle—remains unfulfilled. That is why, I prefer the rhythm of folk-songs.

(3) An appeal to the reader's sensitivity can be made by novel experiments in providing a new idiom by giving new meaning to old words and sayings."

With slight variations, this is a manifesto of the earlier poets, too, who stressed an aliveness to reality, employment of short and striking images and the use of a modern idiom by endowing new meanings to the existing words. Agyeya has, however, referred to the tendency on the part of some of the poetasters to show originality not only in theme but also in technique and to indulge in sham imitation thereby misleading the readers. Such imitators, however, he concedes, are found in all ages and sometime or the other, they are exposed.

While Agyeya's righteous indignation against such imitators is not without justification his concept of having any patent copyright can hardly be appreciated. He and his "fellow wayfarers" themselves betray unmistakable strains of Eliot's poetry and critical thoughts and some of them have acknowledged the debt. No doubt they assimilated the

6. Hari Narayan Vyas, Preface to his Poems in *Deesra Saptak* (P.54-55)
7. Agyeya : Preface to *Deesra Saptak* (P.9-10)
influences and welded them with superb craftsmanship into their own art thus leaving an indelible stamp of their own individuality. A few others, too, carried forward similar trends and what the early poets imbibed directly from Eliot, the others did so from their predecessors as well as from the current writings in English bearing Eliot's influence. Apart from the poets included in the Tar Saptak, a large number of the poets in the subsequent two Saptaks - seven in each, along with many more younger poets are clearly influenced by Eliot in their realist portrayal of the sordid details of life - with all its frustrations, despairs, loneliness, aridity and the debased values of a decadent culture. No doubt, many of them - with the exception of Agyeya, Girija Kumar Mathur and Dharmavir Bharati and a few others - do not share Eliot's views regarding the eternity of time nor do they necessarily display a profound sense of history or tradition. This is mainly perhaps owing to the fact that such concepts were already deep-rooted in Indian culture and literature and a return to them in the context of abject poverty, want, rootlessness, economic disparity and social barriers would have been almost farcical. The main influence is, however, discernible in the technique, namely the employment of sharp, striking and clear images to express a complex feeling, emotion or situation dramatically, and in experiments not only with the language of poetry but also its metre and rhyme.

The irony of sordid existence is ably brought out by the modern poets even in the fifties and the sixties. Shankunt Mathur depicts the contemporary scene, reminiscent of the opening lines of The Game of Chess in The Waste Land:-

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8. The Poets thus included are:-


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"The drawing room is furnished
with silk curtains,
The bathrooms are being washed
with soda, phenyl and hot water,
The fibrous towel is freshly laundered -
The bearer is coming out of the house,
The poon has his belt tightened,
The Secretary has his inevitable diary,
The Car is at the gate,
The people are waiting -
who is coming?
The leader is coming."³

The background stands in sharp contrast to the one in which the representative of the common men who vote for the leader - lives:-

"The Municipal conservancy Van
Is standing in the midst of the alley
Waiting for sweepers.
The universe of filth
In which is constantly shrieking
Like a signal of Death
The siren of the distant Mill,
Hungry is he going -
Who?
The creator of the Leader!"⁴

Madan Vatsyayana shares the other poets' sense of frustration and anger at the economic and social disparities and dramatically describes the humdrum existence:-

"The Calendar is torn up to December;
The glasses are cracked;

9. Shakunt Mathur: Poem on The Creator of Leader in Deesra Saptak (P.45)
10. "Ibid.

........236
The pages of the book are torn and mixed up;
The cups are without handles and just serve as containers;
The walls are full of red and black cobwebs,
The table lamp has neither the bulb nor the shade."11

The poet is painfully conscious of the superiority of the Machines
which claim:

"We are automatic God
By getting into every organ unseen
We dynamize the physical world,
We have no feelings or emotions."12

The anxiety and sense of apprehensions displayed by an employee in
relation to his superiors is described vividly:

"O my Officer,
Just a line from your pen has made the music of my life futile."13

Kirti Chowdhury sardonically comments on:

"All these
Who are masters of their own complexes,
Helpless, defeated poor creatures
In the game of life,
Unsuccessful.
All these
Who are far off from high ideals
But full of base feelings
Of ignorance, stupidity, meanness -

All these
Who are still alive despite strong inhibitions,
Enamoured of their own existence."14

Amongst the later poets, Maxxi Maxxi Kunwar Narayan seems to have been
influenced most by T.S. Eliot. Having obtained his Master's degree in
English literature, he has been writing both poetry as well as criticism.

11. Madan Vatsayana: Poem on Sevayti: My Daughter in Teesra Saptak (p. 87)
12. " Poetic Drama on Ten to Six in the City of.
    Teesra Saptak. (p. 95)
He was on the board of Editors of the Yugchetana till it was closed down in 1950. He has toured abroad in 1955 - to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Russia and China and hence his susceptibility to the Western influences is incontrovertible. To him, as to Eliot, poetry is not merely a turning loose of emotion," but a sensitive expression of mature reaction to the reality of life."

He has successfully created an atmosphere of desolation and stillness through images of time and timelessness, as in:-

"Deeper than truth was that dream
The life was in slumber for a moment in that decay:
The disordered shadows of the ruins,
Envious like burnt flares
Implanted on the temptation of life."\(^{16}\)

His portrayal of stillness against a background of busy activity is truly reminiscent of Eliot:-

"It appears I am in a ghost's house
In a locked, sealed big room,
Remote from centuries in a dark light,
Away from my own kith and kin in a circle of pyramids."\(^{17}\)

Eliot's imagery finds an echo in one of his recent poems when the poet wonders whether it is stillness or noise:-

"On to my left side
Is it my left hand?
Is my sight
Still with me?
Or with the bat of my own hands
Is my head being tossed like a ball?
Whatever I am able to do,
Is it the thought on the object of thought?"\(^{18}\)

Eliot's influence is also perceptible in a sense of history and tradition displayed by some of the modern poets of the later generation. Hari Narayan Vyas holds that new ideals can be derived from the old values:-

15. Munwar Narayan: Preface to his poems in Teesra Saptak (P.149)
18. " Poem on Stillness or Noise (Dharmayug dt.27.7.75.)
"It's an old story -
Ages old.
But come, let's find from this age-old story
A new ideal." 

He shares Eliot's views on the continuity of time:

"Time has written your fate,
With the same old pen and the same old meaning of words." 

Kedarnath Singh holds that in order to express the sensibility of
the current age, the poet should resort to tradition. Almost re-
iterating Eliot's views on the subject he adds that "consciousness of
the past gives the same strength to the poet as a sense of the intensity of small moments in the living present." 

Raghuvir Sahay's desire for introspection is evident in
the lines reflecting a sense of the past with relevance to the present:

"Whenever the past putting its hands on my shoulders
Surprises me by inviting me
For the snake-like shadows of the past of my ancestors
When I have kept off." 

The modern Hindi poets are influenced by Eliot not only in their
search for meaning for reality but also in the manner in which such
reality is to be expressed. It is, therefore, in technique, that Eliot's
impact can be felt most. Muktibodh had earlier striven to find a
meaning:

"The life in search of the meaning is restless,
What is the meaning?"

The modern poet recognises the inadequacy of the language at
his command to convey the meaning fully:

"The poverty of my language
I do recognise -
There is hardly any meaning in what I say."
Similar views have been expressed by Kirti Chewdhury:

"What I have not been able to express,
Is it not in my consciousness?" 26

The modern Hindi poets share Eliot's views that the power to communicate marks the poet as endowed with a special gift as well as a unique responsibility. As Dr. Leavis has lucidly put it: "Indeed his capacity for experiencing and his power of communicating are indistinguishable; not merely because we should not know of the one without the other, but because his power of making words express what he feels is indistinguishable from his awareness of what he feels." 27 As Ranajit, a young Hindi poet has aptly put it:

"You want that
Through the vehicle of words I should reach you
And touch you at your eardrums alone;
But I find not only my voice but my sight also incapable
And I want to express both these in language
In the sensitivity of touch
You want to make a bridge of words
But words are so incapable." 28

Madan Vatsyayan has compared words in poetry to circle and triangle: circle denotes worn-out use of words without sense, while the triangle signifies a scientific use of words, with precision and refinement so as to express the poet's sensibility 29 thereby conforming to Eliot's concept of the precision in language. Stressing the music latent in words, he deprecates the use of redundant words which are not necessary to the basic meaning of poetry. 30 The meaning can best be expressed by

26. Kirti Chewdhury: Poem on What I have not been able to Express in Teesra Saptak (P. 59)
27. F.R. Leavis: New Bearings in English Poetry (P. 19)
28. Rajajit: Poem on Bridge of Words (Dharmayug dt. 26.10.75';
29. Madan Vatsyayan : Preface to his Poems in Teesra Saptak (P. 75)
30. " Ibid. (P. 73).
images, and he excels in presenting new and dramatic images: the dawn comes again "like another pack of cards in my hands." Madan Vatsyayana further subscribes to the view that rhythm is an essential and integral part of poetry and even if free verse is employed - as is done by most of the modern Hindi poets - the lyrical element should not be ignored, since this makes a direct appeal to the reader's heart and endows it with a permanent quality.

Similar views had been earlier expressed both by Raghuvir Sahay and Shamsher Bahadur Singh. The latter while stressing the need for experiments has candidly acknowledged his debt to Eliot and Ezra Pound in technique, and used novel and striking images, like the image of the evening; like "fresh lime water with a pinch of salt" and like "the Saree you are wearing." Raghuvir Sahay, too, has admitted having experimented with rhythm and metres and his images are equally picturesque:

"Light winter, like rosy bashfulness
Like colour going from sleek, whearty cheeks to ears,
Is speaking."

The evening is described as:

"The Sun is now setting as if
Someone is trying to forget his past."}

Kunwar Narayan, too, does not care for any preconceived pattern of poetry but stresses the possibility of evaluation in technique, and attaches great importance to experiments with the language, rhythm and metre; rhyme, according to him, as to Eliot, inhibits the evolution of poetry.

31. Madan Vatsyayana: Poem on Worship of Dawn in Teesra Saptak (P.78)
32. " Poem on Venus Star in Ibid. (P.81)
33. Shamsher Bahadur Singh: Preface to his Poems in Deesra Saptak (P.77)
34. " Poem on Evening quoted in Adhunik Hindi Kavita Men Vimb Vidhan Ka Vikas by Dr. Kedar Nath Singh.
35. Raghuvir Sahay: Poem on Spring in Deesra Saptak (P.140)
36. " Poem on Evening in Ibid. (P.159)
37. Kunwar Narayan: Preface to his Poems in Teesra Saptak (P.147)
and might as well be eschewed. Apart from images like

"wrapped up in the blanket of the night"

The first ray of the dawn emerged," 38

he has successfully employed images of stillness, isolation and timelessness, so familiar in Eliot's poetry.

The revolution in the poetic technique could have hardly been effected but for the influence of Eliot. Needless to say, some of the Hindi poets in their desire for novelty or blind imitation of the Western trends have gone too far— even beyond real life— and they evoked bitter criticism by some of the veteran critics. Acharya Nand Dulare Vajpayee laments that with the experimental poet's accent on intellectuality, "the gulf between the artist and the reader is widened due to the lack of rapport between the two."

Some of the poets— including Agyeya at times— have tended to be diffused and pontifical in their exploration of the subconscious. As Dr. Nagendra, another eminent critic, has pointed out, "experimentalism and novelty are important; but it is equally essential to maintain a harmonious balance between the values of life and evolution." 40

There is no doubt that in their diffuseness— which Agyeya has tried to defend as 'duty in distress' for the expression of the modern complex sensibility, 41 some of the modern Hindi poets have completely failed to evoke the responses in their readers owing to a lack of identity with the sensibility of the age. Small wonder, therefore, that Acharya Nand Dulare Vajpayee in his analysis of the twentieth-century literature excludes the modern poets completely— since he feels that "the number of those who had to 'lead the path' is larger than those who were 'to follow such a path'!" 42

It is idle to deny that the modern Hindi poets of the

41. Agyeya: Essay on Vagarthapratipattaye in Trishanku(P.120)
42. Acharya Nand Dulare Vajpayee: Hindi Sahitya: Bisween Shatabdi.
The experimental school have suffered from certain shortcomings: in their portrayal of the conflict, futility, suspicion and agency of mankind they have betrayed a certain degree of lopsidedness. Nor have they been able to produce a masterpiece: no single work can be compared to that written in the preceding Chhayavad era. The later modern poetry is following a set pattern and is getting almost decadent. Despite the limitations, however, the intrinsic sincerity of purpose and identity of the poet with his environment in general cannot be denied and that is why, Girija Kumar Mathur expresses his confidence in the future of modern poetry and its ability to convey effectively the modern sensibility of the age. It would, however, be idle to deny the influence of English poetry particularly of Eliot which reveal themselves in the choice of themes, and in the technique of presentation. The readiness to learn from foreign authors and movements has imparted richness and variety to Hindi poetry; and apart from direct influences, the inspiration and confidence which the modern Hindi writers have acquired from this acquaintance with Eliot have brought about a radical change in their outlook and attitude. But it would be uncharitable to treat the modern Hindi writers as mere plagiarists. Notwithstanding their susceptibility of the Western influences the modern Hindi poets have striven to leave a stamp of their individuality on their writings. While assimilating the best in foreign literature, they have by and large refused to be led into any servile imitation and thoughtless adoption of Eliot's ideals and models. They have firmly held that the basic stuff and pattern have to be essentially Indian since literature must have roots in our own philosophy, culture and all the essential facts of national life, the foreign influences simply serving as a source of further strength and enrichment. In fact, the true poet, according to Eliot, is one who makes the disparate elements swarming within himself to flow together into a

43. Girija Kumar Mathur: Preface to his Poems Dhoop Ke Dhan.
fusion of harmonious order. The poet's mind, to him, is "a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together." Even Eliot himself is one of these poets, as Douglas Bush has rightly observed," who get some of their most original effects from echoing other writers. The modern Hindi poets have conformed to these concepts and assimilated the images, ideas and technique of Eliot and welded them into their own art.

Eliot stresses fusion, synthesis and amalgamation as essential accomplishments of the poet. Poetic originality to him is "largely an original way of assembling the most disparate and unlikely material to make a new whole." Agyeya, too, while deprecating the tendency on the part of some of the poetasters to indulge in sham imitation, however, holds that "originality refers only to the object" and that the "themes can at best be new, but not novel." Eliot had earlier stated that originality "is by no means a simple idea in the criticism of poetry. True originality is merely development." The noteworthy feature, however, is that many of modern Hindi poets deny foreign influence, either that of Eliot or any other Western poet. Agyeya himself has written about "new" poetry:—

"Someone had discovered the truth
And I put it in my own context;
Someone else had brought the bee-hive,
And I extracted the honey.
Someone's writing had elegance
I further dressed it up,
Someone's sensibility was intense as fire,
And I just summarily rejected it."
He goes on to describe how he made his own someone else's plant which he nursed and how he unconsciously gathered the flowers that belong to someone else; and how

"It was someone else's quote
And I stated it."

On the other hand, Eliot himself has strikingly brought out the theory of "borrowing" or influences: "One of the surest of tests is the way in which a poet borrows. Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn, the bad poet throws it into something which has no cohesion."

Eliot's observations serve as a test for appraising his own influence on modern Hindi poetry. He not only gave a new direction to the modern Hindi poets, but also left them to quote his own expression," as Virgil left Dante, to proceed towards a region where that guide can avail us no further."

The judgement on the Hindi poets would, therefore, depend not on the extent of Eliot's influences on their poetry but on what they did with it. Their own intense sensibility is further refined and enriched by such influences and their art assumed a greater universality of appeal. Their writings bear evidence to a sense of history and tradition, a search for new grounds of reality.

52. " : Poetry and Drama (P.35)
and new levels of consciousness, search for a new idiom and novel rhythms to express the modern sensibility. In fact, Eliot's influence on the development of modern trends in Hindi poetry is more of an evolution in art than imitation:

"And what there is to conquer
By strength and submission has already been discovered
Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
To emulate - but there is no competition -
There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again."53

53. T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*: The East Coker. V.